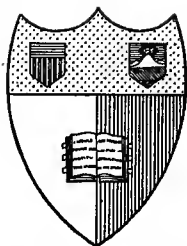


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# BABYLON OF EGYPT

A STUDY IN THE HISTORY OF  
OLD CAIRO

A. J. BUTLER

*Price Four Shillings and Sixpence net*

OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS





# BABYLON OF EGYPT

A STUDY IN THE HISTORY OF  
OLD CAIRO

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BY

A. J. BUTLER, D.LITT.

FELLOW OF BRASENOSE COLLEGE

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AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### *Chapter I.*

Scope of inquiry — Babylon a city on a site with many names — Evidence of Diodorus Siculus — Josephus — Ptolemy : great importance as native of Egypt and contemporary of Trajan — Northward extension of Babylon — Itinerarium Antonini — Notitia Dignitatum Imperii — The name Maķeduniāh or Macedonia — Oxyrhynchus Papyri — John Moschus . . . pp. 1-14

### *Chapter II.*

The name Khēmi or Kēme ; Amélineau's contribution to the question — Coptic and Arabic *scalae* and name equations — Connexion of Babylon and Heliopolis — Meaning of Lioui and of Lûniāh — The term Miṣr al Ḳadîmah — Amélineau's conclusions — Coptic Ostraka . . . . . pp. 15-22

### *Chapter III.*

Resumption of evidence in chronological order — Zosimus — John of Nikiou's importance — His identification of site of Ḳaṣr ash Shama' with that of early Persian fort — Amélineau's strange misconception — Proof that Miṣr and Babylon are one and the same to John of Nikiou — Life of the patriarch Isaac — Greek and Arabic Papyri — The name Fuṣṭât : its origin and meaning — Area of the town and gradual extension — Becker's opinion controverted — Alterations in course of Nile — Arab authorities upon extent of ancient city — Balâdhurî — Ibn Duḡmâḳ's remarkable statement — Question about Ar Raṣad — Origin of term Ḥamrâ . . . . . pp. 23-37

*Chapter IV.*

Citations from Maḳrîzî, Idrîsî, Abû Şâliḥ — The form Babylonia again — Use of term Babylon for Egypt in Middle Ages — Amari's evidence from Pisan and Florentine treaties, &c. — Coptic evidence and Casanova's theory—Coptic as living or dead language in thirteenth century—Arab evidence for broad use of term Babylon as Egypt—Narrow use by Arab writers for particular fort or building — Explanation of usage — Gate of Yûn or Lîûn — Ḳaşr ash Shama'— Ibn Duḳmâḳ on churches by Babylon — Meaning of term Dair Bâblûn — Church of St. Barbara — Al Ḳudâ'î and Maḳrîzî — Babylon and Ar Raşad — Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam — Ibn Duḳmâḳ's confirmation of Al Ḳudâ'î very doubtful . . . . . pp. 38-51

*Chapter V.*

Question of ancient remains on Ar Raşad — Casanova's theory of distinction between Babylon and Ḳaşr ash Shama' at conquest — Evidence against it — John of Nikiou again — Archaeological evidence — Lane's views as cited by S. Lane-Poole — Pococke's testimony — Identification of Persian and Roman fortress by Arabs — Origin of Persian fort — Nebuchadnezzar and Artaxerxes Ochus — Dome of Smoke — Marâşid al Itṭilâ' — Severus — Mas'ûdî — Abû Şâliḥ — Eutychius — No evidence for fort on Ar Raşad in Arab times — Summary and Conclusion . . . . . pp. 52-63

INDEX . . . . . p. 64

# BABYLON OF EGYPT

## CHAPTER I

ALTHOUGH a good deal depends upon the meaning to be attached to the term Babylon in the Arab chronicles of Egypt, and although oriental scholars have given some attention to the subject,<sup>1</sup> I am not aware that any comprehensive study of the question has been made with a view either to define the proper usage of the term in the seventh century of our era or to examine critically those misunderstandings and misapplications of the term, which originated with Arab authors, but have been followed with too ready acquiescence by at least some modern historians.

Of course all are agreed that the name finds its local habitation somewhere in the region of Ancient Miṣr, now called Old Cairo : but the expression Babylon is often narrowed in historical writings to denote either the Roman fortress built by Trajan and called *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, or else a fort in the neighbourhood of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* but not identical with it ; and upon these interpretations are based

<sup>1</sup> Quatremère (*Mém.*, i. 45 seq.), Amélineau in his *Géographie de l'Égypte à l'époque copte*, and Casanova in *Noms coptes du Caire*, as well as in his edition of Maḳrîzî and other works, have dealt with some aspects of the question, and to them I render all due acknowledgement.

conclusions seriously affecting both the history and the topography of the Arab conquest.

On the contrary I shall show, or aim at showing, in this essay that for many centuries before the conquest Babylon was the recognized name of a town or city of great importance: that the term was so understood at the time of the conquest: and that this usage prevailed for some centuries after the conquest. At the same time it will be made clear that, owing to that strange dualism of nomenclature which the normal coexistence of different languages in Egypt renders so common there, the usage of the term cannot be sharply distinguished from other names of the same town or locality: but that in fact the primeval name of **ΧΗΩΙ**, the ancient name of Miṣr (which was also adopted by the Arabs), the name of Memphis, the old capital, the Greek name Letopolis, and finally the name Fustât, bestowed on the place by the Arabs, are all used more or less interchangeably with Babylon at different epochs by various writers, Coptic, Greek, or Arabic.

I cannot pretend to say what is the earliest mention of Babylon in history. But it is sufficient for my purpose to begin with Diodorus Siculus, whose account of Egypt may probably be dated about 50 B.C. He relates<sup>1</sup> that a number of prisoners were brought from Asiatic Babylon by Sesostris to carry out his public works in Egypt, and were driven by the hardships of their task to revolt. Thereupon they seized a strong position on the Nile, carried on war against the Egyptians, and harried

<sup>1</sup> i. 55.

the country round : but they were finally amnestied, and they founded a settlement on the spot which they called Babylon. Ctesias, he adds, gives a different account, alleging that Babylon was founded by some of those who came to Egypt with Semiramis.

Both Sesostris and Semiramis are so remote and so legendary that these stories have little importance except as testifying to the tradition that the name Babylon in Egypt had a real historical origin—which Pauly denies.<sup>1</sup>

Diodorus is said to have travelled in Egypt. Strabo certainly visited that country in 24-25 B.C., and saw at Babylon a fortified position held by one of three Roman legions then garrisoning Egypt.<sup>2</sup> He confirms the tradition ascribing the foundation of this Babylon to a revolt of Babylonians, and in another passage he even applies the term Babylonians to the people of the place.<sup>3</sup> But I have discussed Strabo's evidence so fully elsewhere<sup>4</sup> that I need not repeat my argument here : I am satisfied, however—and most scholars agree—that the Roman encampment at that time must have been on the elevated plateau which lies to the south of Kaşr ash Shama', and which was called later by the Arabs Ar Raşad. But the camp in that position was dependent, as Strabo shows, for its water supply upon a series of water-wheels which raised it from the Nile : and machinery of this kind was obviously

<sup>1</sup> *Real-Encyclopädie*, s.v. Babylon.

<sup>2</sup> *Geog.*, xvii. 35.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Babylonians opposite Memphis,' Οἱ κατὰ Μέμφιν Βαβυλώνιοι κῆβον τιμῶσι, xvii. 812.

<sup>4</sup> *Ancient Coptic Churches*, i. 172.

open to destruction by any hostile force. It was clearly this consideration which made Trajan erect *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* on the flat, close to the river bank, with an inlet for boats from the Nile to the southern gate of the fortress, and he made up for the loss of advantage in position by the immense strength and the height of the walls and towers of the new castle.<sup>1</sup>

Josephus, writing perhaps about A. D. 80, and speaking of the Israelite exodus, says that the Hebrews journeyed *κατὰ Λητοῦς πόλιν, ἔρημον τότε οὔσαν. Βαβυλὼν γὰρ ὕστερον κτίζεται ἐκεῖ, Καμβύσου καταστρεφόμενου τὴν Αἴγυπτον.*<sup>2</sup> What does *ἔρημον* mean? There seems no record of Letopolis as a name of Babylon in later times: and there are only two possible interpretations of the word. Either it means that the place was mere desert at the time of the exodus, that the city of Letopolis subsequently arose there, and that Babylon later occupied the same site; or that Letopolis was an old Egyptian city then abandoned. The latter supposition must be nearer the truth, since it is well known that Pharaonic monuments existed on the spot, and some of them lasted till long after the Arab occupation.

However, Josephus's account would give about 525 B. C. as the date for the foundation of Babylon: and inasmuch as it tends to confirm Strabo's account by suggesting a true historical origin for the name, it supplies a further argument against Pauly's theory. For Pauly contends that Babylon was merely a fanciful name given on the analogy of

<sup>1</sup> The walls were originally at least 60 feet high.

<sup>2</sup> *Ant.*, ii. 15 (315).



scores of other Greek town-names in Egypt. But how can this theory be reconciled with the fact that in this instance the already existing and quite classical Greek name of Letopolis was discontinued, being superseded by a name of non-Greek origin like Babylon? Surely it is more reasonable to suppose that such a change was made by Persians during a Persian occupation of Egypt, whether under Cambyses, as suggested by Josephus, or under Nebuchadnezzar, as alleged by John of Nikiou and several writers. Indeed the strength of this tradition which gives a Babylonian origin to the fortress, if not to the town, indicates that it rests on a historical basis, and is no mere myth or legend.

We now pass to a very definite and interesting notice of the town or city of Babylon by Ptolemy.<sup>1</sup> He not only indicates the geographical position of Babylon in proximity to Heliopolis, but adds the very important remark that the River of Trajan (the well-known Amnis Trajanus, or canal connecting the Nile and the Red Sea) flows through Heroon Polis and the city of Babylon. Now although the course of the Nile has varied in the region of Cairo even during historical times, the old alignment of the eastern bank is fairly well known. It is certain, for instance, that the channel between the island of Raḍāḥ and Ḳaṣr ash Shama' was much wider than at present. Nāṣir-i-Khusrau,<sup>2</sup> who visited the place about A.D. 1047, says that this channel was spanned by a bridge of 36 barges: while Idrīsī, about a century later, gives the number as 30. Moreover, in A.D. 642, the mosque which

<sup>1</sup> *Geog.*, iv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Schefer, p. 153.

'Amr then founded, and of which the site has never changed, stood on the river bank. Abû Şaliḥ,<sup>1</sup> too, records that the church of Minâ in the Ḥamrâ formerly stood on the bank of the Nile: while from John of Nikiou it is clear, as I have elsewhere pointed out,<sup>2</sup> that the eastward trend of the Nile continued as far north at least as Maḳs, and that the quays of Maḳs lay close to the modern Ezbekiâh. On these and the like data a definite line can be drawn for the right bank of the river from the rocky headland south of Kaşr ash Shama' through the region now called Old Cairo and Cairo: and the point where the canal of Trajan took off from the river can be determined with tolerable accuracy. But the physical conformation of the ground is such as to render it improbable that any great variation of the alignment took place between the era of Ptolemy and the Arab invasion: in other words, the mouth of the canal upon the Nile had not then shifted much from its old position, though undoubtedly after the seventh century the land encroached so rapidly upon the eastern shore of the Nile that the canal mouth had to be pushed further and further to the west as the water receded.

But the fact of cardinal importance is that Ptolemy describes the canal as flowing *through the city of Babylon*—not by it, or near it, but through it: so that the canal divided the city, just as later it divided Mişr al Qadîmah (or Old Cairo) and Cairo itself up to the present century. It follows beyond

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Evetts and Butler, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 217 n.

all question that in Ptolemy's time the name Babylon denoted a city which lay both north and south of the canal of Trajan, and that it could not be limited to any town, still less to any point or post, south of the canal.

That Babylon was a city, therefore, and that it was widespread and intersected by the canal, are the two facts which the evidence of Ptolemy established irrefutably.

For Ptolemy, it must be remembered, was a native of Egypt: he spent most of his life in Alexandria: and as his last recorded observation is dated A.D. 151, and he is said to have lived to the age of 78, it is clear that both the construction of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* by Trajan and his excavation of the canal must have taken place in Ptolemy's lifetime. Ptolemy, therefore, wrote with local knowledge, as a contemporary historian as well as geographer, when he called Babylon a city.<sup>1</sup>

I may add that the northward extension of the city is fully confirmed by Arab writers. Thus Ibn Duḡmâḡ<sup>2</sup> says: 'Al Maṭariāh, called also 'Ain Shams (or Heliopolis). There were wonderful remains there, especially the two obelisks famous in all countries. The city in ancient times was very long and wide and *contiguous to Ancient Miṣr* on the site of the present Fustāṭ.' Inasmuch as Miṣr and Fustāṭ are more or less identical with Babylon, this passage corroborates the statement that Babylon

<sup>1</sup> His words are:—*Ἡρώων πόλις δι' ἧς καὶ Βαβυλῶνος πόλεως Τραιανὸς ποταμὸς ῥέει.*

<sup>2</sup> Part V, p. 43.

reached far enough northward to come into touch with the suburbs of Heliopolis. Al Ḳudâ'i, too, seems to record a gate of Ancient Miṣr considerably northward of the city's recognized limits, when he speaks of 'a place called Munyat Ḥarb near the gate of Ancient Miṣr, on the spot, it is said, where Cairo now stands'.<sup>1</sup>

But to resume the sequence of historical evidence. In the *Itinerarium Antonini* of the second century we find the place designated Babylonia, the order being Babylonia, Heliu, Scenas Veteranorum, Vicum Judaeorum, Thou, Heroon, Serapiu, Clysmon. It should of course be noted (1) that there is no sort of confusion here between Babylon and Heliopolis; and (2) that Babylonia, Heliu, and Heroon are all Greek forms in a familiar language which suppresses the complement πόλις; and (3) that in the Greek form Babylonia, the accent would lie upon the penultimate, and that this accent determined the Arab pronunciation (as usual in such cases), so that Babylonia transliterates into the Bâb al Lûniâh of Arab history.

About the year A.D. 303 we read that Apa Tîl was taken by forcible conscription and enrolled in the garrison of the fortress of Babylon:<sup>2</sup> and the same document records that the governor of Egypt, Arianus, came to Babylon and ordered all the soldiers there to worship idols.

In the *Notitia Dignitatum Imperii* are two entries of interest as follows:—

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Ibn Khallikân: ed. de Slane, ii. 603.

<sup>2</sup> MSS. Copt. Vat. 66, fol. 158, quoted by Quatremère.

*Legio quinta Macedonica*<sup>1</sup>—*Memphi*:  
*Legio tertia decima gemina*—*Babylonia*:

which show that in the time of Arcadius and Honorius not only were Memphis and Babylon clearly distinguished, but each was garrisoned by a legion.

Of about the same date is the mention of Babylon by St. Jerome,<sup>2</sup> who speaks of Hilarion's journey from Pelusium to that city: and by Rufinus, who says that there were great numbers of anchorites in the region of Memphis and Babylon.

Among the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* is a document<sup>3</sup> dated A. D. 303, in which the comarchs, or village headmen, record the expenses of three workmen 'sent to Babylon' from the village of Tampeti.

Pegôsh,<sup>4</sup> in the well-known story, was taken on his journey from Pelusium to Babylon.

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, in *Noms Coptes*, pp. 81 seq., devotes several pages to the question why the name Macedonia was sometimes applied to Miṣr according to the testimony of certain Arab writers. He can give no confident explanation of the fact, but suggests a rather elaborate ancient Egyptian etymology for the word Macedonia. I cannot help thinking that a much simpler solution of the difficulty may be found in this statement of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. Given the fact that the Macedonian legion was stationed at Memphis, nothing is more natural than to suppose that the regiment, in recollection of their place of origin or the scene of their titular triumphs, gave the name Macedonia to the district about them, just as Babylonians originally named the city of Babylon after their home in Asia. In giving the name of Macedonia to Miṣr, the Arabs intended the region about Memphis and Babylon, as Casanova justly supposes, and not the country of Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Life of Hilarion, in Rosweyde's *Vitae Patrum*, i. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Part VI, p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> Revillout, *Actes et Contrats* (1876), no. 55: and *Musée Guimet*, xvii. 1 (Vita Pachomii, § 1).

Apollinaris Sidonius in his letter to Agricola about Theodoric says that 'the tables were covered with cloths of Babylon',<sup>1</sup> thus proving that the city then, as later, was famous for its textiles.

Babylon is incidentally mentioned by Palladius, when the writer, speaking of the mount of St. Antony, remarks: *ἐκάθητο δὲ μεταξὺ Βαβυλῶνος καὶ Ἡρακλείους*—a passage definitely ranking Babylon as a city about the year A. D. 400.<sup>2</sup>

That Babylon was the seat of a bishopric is certain. Zosimus, bishop of Babylon, is mentioned by John Moschus,<sup>3</sup> as appointed by the patriarch Apollinaris, probably in the fourth century: Cyrus, bishop of Babylon, is named in the Acts of the Council of Ephesus and in the first Act of the Council of Chalcedon (A. D. 451): and a bishop of Babylon is again recorded in the time of Benjamin—seventh century. Now it is clear that a bishop cannot derive his title from a fort, and must derive it from a city.

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton Jackson's *Shores of the Adriatic: The Italian Side*, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Dom C. Butler, p. 63, xxi. and note. The mount is at Pispir on the Nile, not that by the Red Sea.

<sup>3</sup> *Pratum Spirituale (Vitae Patrum, x. 676)*. But this patriarch, Apollinaris, though twice mentioned by John Moschus, is not in Renaudot or in the usual lists of patriarchs.

## CHAPTER II

ALTHOUGH it may not be quite consistent with the chronological order which I am following, I may here examine the evidence of M. Amélineau and Mr. Crum. The former remarks<sup>1</sup> under the word Kîmé ~~REHLE~~ that while the term usually denotes Northern or Lower Egypt, it seems also to be used as the name of a town, like مصر in Arabic. This town he takes to be Memphis, and he refers to Revillout's *Actes et Contrats*, pp. 104, 105, 106, 109: adding, however, that these passages are too fragmentary to found any serious thesis upon. The Synaxar, he proceeds, speaks of a town which it calls Mişr al Qadîmah, and also of a town of Mişr, 'which cannot be Cairo, because that town was built long after the persecution of Diocletian'. That surely is a strange remark. Of course the truth is that Mişr was the earlier name, and that the epithet Qadîmah was added only in later times, when the place had to be distinguished from the new town in the vicinity, viz. Mişr al Qâhirah or Cairo. In the time of Diocletian there was only the one name Mişr, though beyond reasonable doubt it was applied to Memphis as well as to Babylon.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, M. Amélineau himself goes on to point

<sup>1</sup> *Géog. copte*, pp. 223-5.

<sup>2</sup> Champollion thinks it improbable that the name Mişr, whatever its origin, was in vogue among native Egyptians.

out that in the Acts of Apatir<sup>1</sup>: 'le castrum de Babylone est rendu en arabe par مصر': and in the history of Timotheus the martyr, who belonged to Miṣr al Qadimah, and suffered under Diocletian, Miṣr again is equivalent to the Castle of Babylon. I would rather say equivalent to Babylon, although the association of the place with a strong fortress naturally caused the town to be spoken of as the Fortress of Babylon.

But the *scalae* give other equivalents. Thus, in MSS. Copt. Bib. Nat., No. 43, we find

منف مصر القديمة  
 بابylon مصر

No. 44 κρητον منف مصر<sup>2</sup>

Nos. 50, 53, 54, 55

ωη πεε βαβylon مصر و عين شمس

No. 54 منف وهي مصر القديمة

In the Bodleian Codex Mareschalchus, and also in Lord Crawford's MS., the same ωη πεε βαβylon = مصر و عين شمس occurs: while in the British Museum Codex Orientalis we have with ωη πεε βαβylon the Arabic مصر وهي عين شمس—a variation which identifies Babylon with 'Ain Shams, and both with Miṣr: also ιλιον = عين شمس وهي مصر = القديمة.<sup>3</sup>

In the list of bishoprics<sup>4</sup> we have ιλιον βαβylon = πετρη = عين شمس.

<sup>1</sup> Hyvernat, *Actes des Martyrs*, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> Quatremère quotes no. 44, fol. 79, as giving to Fustât the name of Babylon: by Fustât he may mean Miṣr. (*Mém.*, i. 48.)

<sup>3</sup> Most of these equivalents are taken from the *scalae* given by Amélineau in App. III to his *Géog. copte*.

<sup>4</sup> Id., App. IV.



εἰληοτ = ταββητων βαθι = (sic) مصر الكرشى  
مجتمع.

παλιν φρεστων κεντω βαβητων = بابلون  
(sic) مصر مشطاط.

While in another list the Arabic is more correct :

εἰληοτ βαθαι = الكرسين مجتمع.

These correspondences prove that Ōn—variously called Iliou, Eilēou,<sup>1</sup> Heliopolis, and 'Ain Shams—is closely coupled with Babylon,<sup>2</sup> indeed identified with

<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that these Coptic forms account for the **Λιοτι** which puzzled Champollion (*L'Égypte sous les Pharaons*, ii. 35) as well as Quatremère (*Mém.*, i. 49), and which Amélineau (*Géog. copte*, p. 541) regards as the original name of the locality called Fustât by the Arabs on the strength of an equivalent **Λιοτι** = القاهرة. There seems no evidence to support this conclusion, and I think it quite mistaken. Surely Lioui is a mere variant of Iliou, which again, like Eilēou, is taken from the Greek Ἡλίου, the πόλις being often omitted in such words, as in the *Itinerarium Antonini*, cited above (p. 12). The confusion of Lioui or 'Ain Shams with Babylon, Fustât, and Cairo is plain enough from the quotations I have given, and the identification of Lioui with Cairo amounts to precisely the same thing as the identification of 'Ain Shams with Babylon—an error or an exaggeration frequent in Arab writers.

<sup>2</sup> This coupling of Ōn with Babylon in the list of bishoprics gives the clue to the meaning of the Arabic phrase 'the two sees united', which Amélineau has missed somewhat strangely (*op. cit.*, p. 540). He says: 'Il y avait là deux sièges réunis, celui de Fostât et celui de Babylone, et ils étaient réunis dans une ville qui se nommait Eilēou': and he goes on to remark that Lioui can only mean Cairo, appealing to the word Lûnîah, which Abû Şâlih gives as equivalent to Fustât, in confirmation of his view. Thus he argues that Lûnîah is a wrong reading for Lûîah. In fact it is a totally different word, arising, as I have shown, from the false etymology which split up Babilonia or Babilûnîah into Bâb al Lûnîah. Moreover, it is on the one hand impossible to suppose that the Arab settlement of Fustât was ever erected into a bishop's see, and on the other certain that there was an ancient see of Babylon; certain also that the still more ancient metropolis of

Babylon, with Miṣr, and with Fustât : and the fact that all these several identifications are made shows how hazy were the topographical limits of the several cities, and how names survived in disregard and confusion of such limits, despite historical changes and the long passage of time.

On the whole subject of these correspondences one may refer to M. Casanova's *Noms coptes du Caire*,<sup>1</sup> with most of which I cordially agree. Thus he remarks:<sup>2</sup> 'Ainsi pour les Coptes aucune différence entre 'Ain Chams, le Caire, Foṣṭât et Babylone. Tous ces noms se confondent et s'échangent' : and again, 'Le nom de Babylone s'étend jusqu'au delà du Caire, jusqu'à l'ancienne Héliopolis'.

But obviously in these *scalae* or lists the use of the term Fustât and of the epithet Kādîmah applied to Miṣr before Cairo was founded, requires to be explained. The explanation seems simple enough. Such usage is clearly anachronistic, though the

Heliu was the seat originally of a bishopric. This proposition, which I first laid down as a theory based on inherent probability, I have now proved as fact by the discovery of a passage in John Moschus (cap. 124) as follows:—'Tenensque nos Papa Alexandrinus beatissimus Apollinaris omnes tres fecit episcopos: unum quidem Heliopoleos, alium Leontopoleos, me vero in Babylonem misit' (*Vitae Patrum*, x. 676). John Moschus is not speaking of himself, and the exact date of Apollinaris's patriarchate I do not know: but there is no question that the two separate sees of Heliopolis and Babylon existed simultaneously. Nor can it be doubted that, as Heliopolis sank down and decayed, while Babylon advanced in importance, it became necessary to unite the two sees. It was equally natural that the name of Babylon should ultimately prevail in the combination, as it did prevail. But the 'two sees united' of the *scalae* were Babylon and Heliopolis, not Babylon and Fustât.

<sup>1</sup> pp. 38 seq.

<sup>2</sup> p. 41.

anachronisms cannot have existed in the original lists, but represent additions or alterations made by copyists, as the changes of time rendered further equivalents necessary.

To return to M. Amélineau. There is one remark of his which needs some qualifying. He argues that the name ~~RUHE~~ was given first to Memphis, but that in after time as Memphis declined, *that city* was called Miṣr al Qāḍimah. Despite the precise identification of Memphis with Miṣr al Qāḍimah in the *scalae* quoted above, I do not think it true to say that the site of Memphis was commonly called Miṣr al Qāḍimah. It is not alleged that such a use of the name to denote Memphis as opposed to Babylon is unknown : for 'Abd al Latif, in a passage describing the ruins of Memphis, calls the site Miṣr al Qāḍimah, and all doubt of his meaning is removed, because he defines the place as in the region or province of Jīzah. But such usage is rare and exceptional. Miṣr al Qāḍimah, it must be remembered, is a term of Arab origin, and when it arose—in the seventh century or later—Memphis had practically disappeared as the capital, and the Miṣr of the Arab historians undoubtedly lay on the eastern bank of the Nile. Indeed, M. Amélineau's proposition is rather the converse of the truth. For it is quite certain that Arab writers often transferred the name of Memphis to Miṣr al Qāḍimah : they imagined, in fact, that Memphis had occupied the site of Babylon. This I take to be the true explanation of the correspondence between the two cities given in the *scalae*, in which Miṣr is rather called Memphis than Memphis called Miṣr. The Arabs had little knowledge of

Memphis, but it was easy for them to transpose the site, or to extend the boundaries, of ancient Memphis to the ancient city of Miṣr on the other side of the river.

Apart from this, however, M. Amélineau's final conclusion is that the name **KHME** was given to three different towns in Egypt, viz. (1) to Memphis; (2) to Babylon after the Persian conquest and during the Roman period; and (3) to Fustât and Cairo: and this conclusion, with certain reserves as to the chronological divisions, seems sound.

But apparently the word **KHME** is used in contexts in which it is both impossible to translate it by Lower Egypt and difficult to render it as a city, whether Memphis or Miṣr. Thus in Mr. Crum's *Coptic Ostraka* **KHME** occurs in no. 385, and a note elsewhere<sup>1</sup> refers to a phrase in Revillout's *Actes et Contrats*, 56, viz. 'in the monastery or without in Kême', whence it is argued that Kême must mean the valley, and cannot mean Babylon, because Babylon is mentioned in the same text; and Mr. Crum cites Stern's opinion that Kême in the Jeremias papyri from Memphis means Upper Egypt. Reference is also made to the story of Pegôsh, who in his journey from Pelusium was made to avoid Panau lest he should be rescued before reaching Kême, and who was taken to Babylon and thence to Antinoë. Here again Mr. Crum alleges that Kême must be identified with Upper Egypt; while Sir F. G. Kenyon, on the same evidence, suggests that Kême is an intermediate district—Middle Egypt.

On this I would remark that all difficulty would disappear, at least in regard to the quotation from

<sup>1</sup> Id., p. 73.

Revillout and the story of Pegôsh, if Kême is understood to mean Memphis. The fear was that the prisoner Pegôsh might be rescued in the Delta before he could reach Memphis on his journey southward: accordingly he was taken direct—no doubt over the desert—to Babylon, where he would naturally be made to cross to the western bank by the bridge of boats or by ferry, and so to Memphis and Antinoë. To hold this hypothesis at least is easier than to reconcile M. Amélineau's statement that Kême usually means Lower Egypt with Mr. Crum's view that it means Upper Egypt, or Sir F. G. Kenyon's that it means something between the two.

The confusion between Memphis and Babylon had not arisen among Coptic writers of this period. I have shown that somewhat earlier each of the two cities had its own Roman legion, and the distinction between them is made clear by many passages in Coptic MSS.<sup>1</sup> Yet it must be remembered that, just as Miṣr is used to denote both the city of Miṣr and the country of Egypt, so Kême or Khêmi was also used ambiguously. Thus in the life of Pachomius,<sup>2</sup> in a phrase which definitely contrasts Egypt with the Thebaid, the word for Egypt is Ⲭⲏⲙⲉ; while in the Coptic Apocrypha,<sup>3</sup> where the arch-

<sup>1</sup> Thus in Hyvernat's *Actes des Martyrs*, p. 94, we have ⲧⲁⲙⲙⲟⲩ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲙⲉⲙⲉⲩⲓ for the village of Tammôu, near Memphis, on the western bank (v. Amélineau, *Géog. copte*, p. 477): and ⲉⲛⲓⲕⲁⲥⲧⲣⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲕⲁⲃⲓⲗⲟⲛ, pp. 91 and 93. The latter phrase Hyvernat curiously renders 'au champ de Babylone', but surely it means to the fortress of Babylon.

<sup>2</sup> *An. Mus. Guimet*, xvii, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Wallis Budge, p. 105.

bishop of Alexandria 'sent festal letters southward throughout all Kême', obviously Kême denotes neither Lower Egypt nor Upper Egypt exclusively, but the whole of Egypt within the archbishopric. But such instances illustrate the flexible character of these Coptic terms, and prove that no very rigid conclusion as to the precise meaning of Kême or Khêmi can be based upon any particular text or passage. It was an elastic term.

### CHAPTER III

RETURNING now from this digression to the sequence of authorities upon the use of the word Babylon, I come to Zosimus, who wrote probably c. A.D. 450. In describing the defeat and death of Probus in the campaign against Zenobia's occupation of Egypt, he relates that the Roman general seized τὸ πρὸς τῇ Βαβυλῶνι ὄρος<sup>1</sup>—the mountain near Babylon. What mountain was in the writer's mind? There are only two alternatives: either it was some part of Mount Muḳaṭṭam, such as the place where the citadel of Cairo now stands,—and this fulfils the condition of commanding the route to Syria better than any other; or it was that other elevation called by the Arabs Ar Raṣad or Jabal Jûyûshî—that elevation with which both M. Casanova and Mr. Guest associate specially the name Babylon. But the language of Zosimus renders it quite impossible that he can have regarded the name Babylon as attaching to either mount. For whichever hill he had in mind, it was *near* Babylon, and so was not Babylon. In thus clearly distinguishing it from Babylon, he proved not only that neither hill could be called Babylon, but also that Babylon was the name of the city and not of a mount.

<sup>1</sup> *Corp. Script. Hist. Byzant.* (ed. Bekker, Bonnae), lib. i, c. 44.

We now come to John of Nikiou, whose important evidence requires close examination. His account is as follows: 'Trajan went to Egypt and there built a fortress with a powerful and impregnable citadel having an abundant supply of water, and he named it Babylon of Egypt. This fortress had originally been founded by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Medes and Persians, who called it the Fortress of Babylon. It was at the time when he had become king of Egypt by the will of God, and when after the destruction of Jerusalem he had exiled the Jews, who stoned the prophet of God at Thebes in Egypt and committed many crimes. Thereupon Nebuchadnezzar came in person to Egypt with a large army, conquered the country—for the Jews had rebelled against him—and called the fortress after the name of his own capital, viz. Babylon. As for Trajan, he raised the circuit walls and enlarged the other buildings of the fortress. He also had a small canal excavated for carrying Nile water to Clysma and connecting the Nile with the Red Sea. This he called the canal of Trajan.'<sup>1</sup>

Now there are two main points to notice in this narrative.

(1) The site of Trajan's fortress (which is unquestionably *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*), is absolutely identified by John of Nikiou with the site of a Persian fortress dating from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. John betrays no consciousness whatever that the original Babylonian fort may have occupied a different site from that of Trajan's stronghold: and his evidence must be taken to prove that at the

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Zotenberg, pp. 413-14.



time of the Arab conquest all trace of a Persian fort on Ar Raṣad had disappeared—a conclusion which is singularly borne out by other Egyptian writers. Thus Eutychius, who wrote c. A.D. 920, and who was a native of Old Cairo, strongly retains the Persian tradition: but he alleges<sup>1</sup> that King Artaxerxes Ochus 'built at Fuṣṭāṭ Miṣr the fortress which is now called Ḳaṣr ash Shama'.

(2) The original foundation of the fortress is associated with a rebellion. But while Strabo makes out that the rebels were Babylonians who built the first fortress in aid of their revolt, John of Nikiou declares that it was Nebuchadnezzar who built the fortress in order to secure the country after he had crushed a rebellion of the Jews. I confess that John's story, though written so long after Strabo's, has the greater air of probability. The date of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt is about 567 B.C.

But passing on from this question for the moment, one must note further that all through the cited passage it is the *Fortress of Babylon* which is spoken of. Upon this M. Amélineau remarks: 'Puis, dans un grand nombre de passages, il est parlé de la ville de Babylone avec une confusion incroyable, que ne fait (*sic*) qu'augmenter les notes du traducteur.' I cannot understand this remark. M. Amélineau refers in a foot-note to five passages, but in no single one of them does the expression 'town of Babylon' occur. On pp. 555, 556, and 562 the term is 'the citadel of Babylon': on pp. 557 and 559, 'Babylon of Egypt': on pp. 562 and 566 it is 'the citadel of Babylon ot

<sup>1</sup> Ann., i. 67.

Egypt': on p. 575 the patriarch Cyrus went 'to Babylon' simply: and on p. 577 we read that the victorious Arabs forced the Egyptians to clear out Trajan's canal (which had become choked up) in order to bring the Nile water from 'Babylon of Egypt' to the Red Sea. The text, therefore, of John of Nikiou does not present any trace of that incredible confusion on the subject of Babylon which M. Amélineau discovers there.

However, I fully grant, and indeed insist strongly on the point, that, although there is no confusion whatever in John of Nikiou's language as it stands, the word Babylon is used in some of these passages to denote a town or city. But I hold that this is due to no error on the part of writer or translator, but is deliberately intended by John of Nikiou. When he says that Cyrus went to Babylon, and that the canal was cleaned out so as to make a waterway from Babylon to the Red Sea, it is quite clear that Babylon denotes a city: and we get back again to the statement of Ptolemy that the city of Babylon lay across the canal of Trajan. So when John speaks of the 'fortress of Babylon', he means either the fortified city of Babylon, or simply the fortress in Babylon, i.e. *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, which formed the citadel of Babylon: and the term 'Babylon of Egypt' corresponds to the Coptic *ⲃⲁⲃⲩⲗⲟⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲏⲱ* and is used generally as equivalent to the city.

Much is made of the distinction which John appears to draw between Babylon and *Miṣr* in the chapter-heading CXIV (CXV), which runs: 'How the Muslims gained possession of *Miṣr* in the 14th year of the lunar cycle, and took possession of the

citadel of Babylon in the 15th year.'<sup>1</sup> The difference of expression is undeniable: but if it can be shown that *Miṣr* and Babylon were convertible terms, as I believe, then the difference has no deeper cause than mere avoidance of tautology. It seems to me that the proof of my contention lies in the very next chapter-heading CXV (CXVI): for it tells 'Of the return of the patriarch Cyrus from exile and his departure *to Miṣr* to pay tribute to the Muslims'. Now in the chapter which bears the corresponding number in the text there is nothing at all about these events. The discrepancy is explained by the fact that the text is notoriously disordered. But in chapters CXIX and CXX, on the other hand, we have an unmistakeable recital of the very events to which chapter-heading CXV refers. For there<sup>2</sup> is the record of Cyrus's return from exile, followed by an account of the ceremonies and services which he attended at Alexandria: and immediately afterwards come the words: 'Cyrus then journeyed *to Babylon* to treat for peace with the Muslims, and offered to pay them tribute if they would put an end to the war in Egypt.'<sup>3</sup> Here the correspondence between the title of the chapter and the actual narrative of the text is so close and so certain that it cannot be questioned: but Cyrus is described in the one as going to *Miṣr* to pay tribute to the Muslims and in the other as going to Babylon to pay tribute to the Muslims. Whence it follows that John of Nikiou did regard *Miṣr* and Babylon as meaning the same thing, and also that he did speak of Babylon as a city.

<sup>1</sup> p. 357.<sup>2</sup> p. 572.<sup>3</sup> p. 575.

John of Nikiou's date is roughly the latter part of the seventh century, and similar use of the word Babylon to denote the city is found in another authentic Coptic document of about the same date—the Life of the patriarch Isaac. In that story the bishops summoned from Alexandria by 'Abd al 'Aziz 'arrived at Babylon'. Then we read that the bishops and 'a number of people from Babylon and Alexandria'<sup>1</sup> met in the church of St. Sergius, which still exists in the fortress of Kaşr ash Shama': and when Isaac's consecration as patriarch was accomplished, it was celebrated by an outburst of joy and festivity 'from Babylon to Alexandria'. Nothing could more decisively establish the meaning of Babylon as city of Babylon than this coupling of the two capitals, Babylon and Alexandria, together.

So in the Memphitic codex,<sup>2</sup> which contains the same history, the term Babylon occurs three times on a single page denoting the city. The date of Isaac's consecration was A.D. 690, as I have shown elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

A little later both Greek and Arabic papyri<sup>4</sup> are found constantly using the term Babylon, especially in connexion with payment of taxes or delivery of corn at the city, which had become the capital under Muslim rule, to the neglect of Alexandria. Thus in A.D. 708 Kurrah orders the people of Ashfûḥ to pay their tax or tribute quarterly at Babylon. An Arabic

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire du patriarche copte Isaac*, par E. Amélineau: Paris, 1890, pp. 45, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Zoega, *Cat. Codd. Copt.*, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 552.

<sup>4</sup> *Papyri Schott-Reinhardt*, i, p. 86 (Heidelberg, 1906).

text contains an order for delivery of produce at the granaries of Babylon, and I may note here in passing that the Arabic form of the word is Bâb al Yûn باب اليون.<sup>1</sup> With this compare the ἀμὴρ τοῦ σίτου Βαβυλῶνος, quoted from Wessely by Becker,<sup>2</sup> which corresponds to the Roman *praefectus annonae*. A similar order seems referred to in the eighth-century Greek papyrus in the Khedivial Library at Cairo, where the expression occurs καθολικῶν ὀρρίων Βαβυλῶνος.<sup>3</sup> Many like allusions are found in the Aphrodito papyri in the British Museum.<sup>4</sup> Thus nos. 1335 and 1407 speak of the corn-stores at Babylon and delivery of wheat 'for the Muḥajirûn of Fustât'. In nos. 1371 and 1376 Rauḍah is described as 'the island of Babylon'. In no. 1378 mention is made of a palace being built at Fustât near the river for the Amîr al Mû'minîn, and materials are ordered to be delivered 'in Babylon for the said palace'. This use of Babylon and Fustât in the same document is curious: but the form in the Greek is φοσσάτου, which occurs also in no. 1379 and in the Schott-Reinhardt papyri.<sup>5</sup> In nos. 1386, 1387, and 1404, granaries at Babylon are again named, while in no. 1379 we read of a granary being built at Fustât. In the account of tribute from the village of Aphrodito, no. 1411, after payments in respect of various field apportionments comes the item 'from the men

<sup>1</sup> Id. ib., p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *Studia Sinaitica*, no. XII, p. 1 (1907).

<sup>4</sup> Translated by Mr. H. I. Bell in *Der Islam*, June and November, 1911, March and October, 1912.

<sup>5</sup> p. 90. The Coptic ⲫⲱⲥⲁⲩⲟⲛ occurs in the Catalogue of the Rylands Papyri, p. 173.

who are at Babylon', which possibly refers to workmen sent there from Aphrodito: as in no. 1414 we read of skilled workmen employed on the palace of the Amîr al Mû'minîn and at the dockyards in Babylon: and again in no. 1433 mention is made of one workman 'for the building of the fortress of Babylon'—which must refer to some sort of repair. In the same interesting document a 'carpenter for work ordered by the Amîr at Babylon', material for the Amîr's palace at Babylon, a 'currier for the Amîr's tent which is being made at Babylon', and a 'shift of iron-workers at Babylon', may be noted: and the *carabi* or vessels being built 'in the island of Babylon' are three times named in this papyrus and as many times in no. 1434, and again in no. 1435. Two other uses of the term Babylon in the eighth century may be found in Mr. Crum's *Rechtsurkunden aus Djême*,<sup>1</sup> and there are many instances in the British Museum Catalogue of Coptic MSS. The frequent recurrence of Babylon in these documents of daily life, and the total absence in them of any corresponding Arabic name, show how familiar and widespread was the use of the term to denote a capital city. The same may be said of the references in the Papyrus Rainer.<sup>2</sup>

These instances are more than enough to prove that in popular parlance the term Babylon was used to denote the whole region covered by the term Mişr at that time and later by Mişr al Qadîmah. They prove also, I think, that at that date the dis-

<sup>1</sup> Nos. 5. 21 and 93. 17 (Leipzig, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> For 1887, p. 58.

inction between Babylon and Fustât amounted only to this—that Fustât was a mere quarter in the city : in other words, the term Fustât had not then won its way to acceptance as the definite designation of any Muslim town. I have already shown that the supposed connexion between the name Fustât and the tent of 'Amr is mainly legendary ; that Fustât is a word foreign to the Arabic ;<sup>1</sup> that its origin is to be found in the Byzantine *φόσσατον* or *φοσσᾶτον*, which signifies a camp ; and that the Arabs probably caught the name in the first instance from the Romans at Babylon, who naturally spoke of the region north of the fortress where 'Amr pitched his standard as 'the camp'. This explanation of the term has now been generally accepted. From it there follows the conclusion that the area covered by the name Fustât was originally a very restricted one—that in fact, as I have said elsewhere, the town of Fustât was not laid out on any large scale with a definite plan of making it the Muslim capital.

There is no question that the first fixed settlement centred about the region marked by the Mosque of 'Amr, and that the Muslim town gradually spread eastward and southward from that point. But the evidence of the papyri shows that even sixty or seventy years after the conquest the name Fustât had not acquired that wider significance which it attained in later times, when it became equivalent to Miṣr. When one finds, for example, in the Aphrodito papyri the use of both terms Fustât and Babylon together, one is bound to infer that Babylon is still

<sup>1</sup> *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, pp. 339-40, and notes.

the general term for the city, while Fustât denotes merely the particular locality in which the Arabs were quartered. This conclusion is in general agreement with that of Becker,<sup>1</sup> who says, 'As far as we know from papyri, Babylon and Fustât were still distinguished at the end of the first century (A.H.). . . . In Fustât lived the Muḥâjirûn . . . there their Khiṭât were marked out, and the seat of the administration'. So also Mr. Guest in his well-known article on the Foundation of Fustât:<sup>2</sup>

'Speaking generally one may say that the foundation of Fustât probably did not mean much more than the making permanent of the camp already on the site': and again, 'The busy commercial town described by Ibn Hauqal,<sup>3</sup> with its crowded markets and blocks of buildings, some containing as many as two hundred people, belongs to the tenth century. This state must have been reached gradually. A long straggling colony of mean houses and hovels, or more likely of huts and booths, such as one may see nowadays attached to some town to which seminomad Arabs resort; arranged irregularly in groups in loose order concentrated to some extent about the Mosque of 'Amr as the focus formed by the centre of authority . . . this is the picture that our accounts of Fustât in the days of 'Amr enable us to draw.'

In what way and at what times the first Muslim settlements spread, and Fustât advanced to a civic

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. Babylon.

<sup>2</sup> *J. R. A. S.*, January, 1907.

<sup>3</sup> Also, I may add, by Nâṣir-i-Khusrau. See Schefer's well-known edition of the *Sefer Nameh*.



dignity and importance which enabled it in Muslim acceptance to rival the ancient name of Miṣr, and to supersede that of Babylon,—these are questions with which this essay has little concern. But in Mr. Guest's admirable article, and the well-known studies of MM. Casanova and Salmon upon the topography of Cairo, will be found the principal information available. My purpose has been merely to show that at the time of the conquest the term Babylon denoted the same thing as Miṣr, just as Fustât afterwards denoted the same thing as Miṣr; and that consequently it must be a pure anachronism to limit the meaning of the term Babylon, as used in the early historians, to that point in the topography of Old Cairo where the name Bâblûn happens to linger to-day, or indeed to any point in the wide area of the city.

Yet it is certain, as Becker says, that the original distinction between Fustât and Babylon became lost, the name Babylon tending to fall out of vogue with the Arabs, while it survived in Coptic usage. I cannot agree with him, however, when he avers that the application of the term Babylon was *extended* by the Copts, who 'occasionally used Babylon to describe the whole of the great series of towns from Kaṣr aṣh Shama' through Fustât or Cairo to Maṭariāh—Heliopolis'. What proof is there of any such extension? Becker's suggestion is indeed the exact converse of the truth, which is that, in using the term in its wider significance, the Copts were merely maintaining with their wonted conservatism the custom and habit of antiquity: whereas the Arabs did undoubtedly extend the use of the term Fustât

(which first applied to a mere section of Babylon) to denote the whole city, until the name Babylon was narrowed and fell into abeyance and disappeared from the popular language.

The entire history of the usage of the word from the time of Ptolemy onwards shows that the area covered by the name in Roman times already extended far enough to embrace the whole of that 'great series of towns' not merely from *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, but from *Ar Raṣad* in the south to the northern limits of *Fuṣṭât* and *Cairo*. Any extension of the name Babylon, therefore, took place *before* and not after the Arab conquest; and when Ptolemy speaks of Trajan's canal as 'flowing through Babylon city', he implies that the city extended north as well as south of the canal.

What, then, was the line of the canal, and where was its mouth on the Nile, in A.D. 640? I have already stated that these questions admit of fairly precise answers, thanks to the scholarly labours of M. Casanova and of Mr. Guest. It is needless here to recapitulate their results: indeed, of M. Casanova's great work on the topography of *Fuṣṭât* only a part at present has been published. But, besides the plan at the end of his *Noms Coptes*, he gives a sketch showing where the canal of Trajan took off from the Nile,<sup>1</sup> and gives the authorities upon which it is

<sup>1</sup> *Essai de reconstitution topographique de la ville de Fouṣṭât ou Miṣr*, par P. Casanova (Inst. Franç. d'Arch. Orient., 1913), croquis no. 26, p. 78. See also his *Noms Coptes*, p. 99, 'Les Déplacements du Nil': and Prince Caetani's *Annali dell' Islam*, vol. iv, p. 568, though this last plan is very rough and sketchy. Another small plan may be found in *The Story of Cairo*, by S. Lane-Poole, p. 256.

founded; and Mr. Guest<sup>1</sup> has drawn a rough plan of Fustât in A.D. 642, in which the mouth of the canal is just north of the church of Mâri Mînâ. Until M. Casanova has published his complete map uniting his detail sketches of the topography, I am unable to say how minutely the two authorities agree: but judging from his *Essai* and from the very definite statement in his edition of Maḳrîzî<sup>2</sup> there seems little room for divergence of opinion. In any case the difference cannot be material for my purpose, which is merely to show that, unless and until Ptolemy's explicit evidence is discredited or rather disproved, the city of Babylon, spreading on both sides of Trajan's canal, must in those days have occupied northwards a considerable area now included in modern Cairo.

And of this wide-spreading city the Arab historians have some clear traditions remaining. Thus Al Baladhurî and Al Ḥazimî both speak of an earlier town on the site occupied by Fustât:<sup>3</sup> but almost the only precise statement with regard to the older city of Babylon to be found in Arab writings is that the most thickly populated part of the township was the region known to the Arabs as Al Ḥamrâ al Ḳuşwâ. But this isolated statement made by Ibn Duḳmâḳ<sup>4</sup> is of singular

<sup>1</sup> *Misr in the Fifteenth Century*, by A. R. Guest and E. T. Richmond: in *J. R. A. S.*, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> *Description historique et géographique de l'Égypte*: trad. par P. Casanova, pp. 307-8 (Inst. Franç. d'Arch. Orient., 1906).

<sup>3</sup> *J. R. A. S.*, January, 1907, Guest's article on the 'Foundation of Fustât', p. 63, Al Ḥazimî is cited by Maḳrîzî (i. 287), but his date is uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> iv. 91, as quoted by Guest, loc. cit.

interest and importance, because a glance at the map furnished by Mr. Guest<sup>1</sup> will show that Al Ḥamrâ al Ḳuṣwâ was the most northern quarter of Fuṣṭât, lying between Kôm al Aḥmar and Jabal Yashkur, towards the mouth of Trajan's canal, *by which it was intersected*. In other words, this casual remark of Ibn Duḡmâḡ provides a very singular confirmation of Ptolemy's statement that the canal of Trajan flowed through the city of Babylon.

Differing from Mr. Guest, I venture to think that great weight must be attached to this piece of information, which seems to fit in with all the facts and to serve for correction of some erroneous conclusions. Thus it contradicts my former theory that at the time of the conquest it was Ar Raṣad and the adjacent locality<sup>2</sup> which were mainly occupied by the town of Miṣr or Babylon. But being thus in conflict with Ibn Duḡmâḡ, I must admit that he is right, and I am wrong; and though I still hold that the town—or at least the name—of Babylon originated upon Ar Raṣad, I accept literally Ibn Duḡmâḡ's statement that in Roman times it centred much further north and lay across the canal of Trajan. This at once makes it easier to understand the settled tradition that the confines of Babylon and of Heliopolis were almost in touch, and it clears up John of Nikiou's statement that the city of Miṣr not only fell long before the fall of the fortress, but fell without offering any marked resistance. Indeed, one can now realize how this main part of the city blocked the path of the advancing Arabs, and had

<sup>1</sup> loc. cit. after p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 245.

to be captured before 'Amr could pitch his camp against the walls of the fortress.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The name Ḥamrâ is supposed to denote a Roman settlement by the 'red' complexion which the Arabs associated with the Romans: and Ibn Duḡmâḡ elsewhere (iv. 5) explains the term by saying that the three Ḥamrâs were settled by those Romans who had embraced Islam in Syria, and had accompanied 'Amr in his march on Egypt. It may be questioned whether 'Amr carried with him enough Romans to settle so wide a district, and whether the name is not rather in reminiscence of the conquered Romans on the spot. But this etymology may be quite fanciful: and Abû Şâlih (p. 102) explains the name otherwise by saying that it refers to a red standard which was set up by the Arabs at the conquest. On the other hand, Goldziher, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* for October, 1903, points out that it was a common practice with the Arabs to designate non-Arab western folk as 'red', i.e. fair-complexioned, and he refers to a note of his own.

I may add that Europeans were also called by the Arabs the 'fair' or 'tawny' race, Banû al Aşfar: see, for example, Ibn Khallikân (ed. de Slane), vol. iv, p. 8, the curious passage with its play on colour, p. 371, and note 6 on p. 590.

## CHAPTER IV

THERE is no want of additional evidence in Arab writers, though they are not as explicit as might be desired. Thus Maḳrīzī quotes Ibn Sa'īd as saying, on the authority of the Kitāb al Kama'im—'As for Fustāṭ Miṣr, its buildings originally joined those of 'Ain Shams. Islam arose. There was (at Miṣr) a fortress round which were dwelling-places. It was against this fortress that 'Amr camped, and he pitched his tent on the site of the mosque called after him.' This, of course, identifies the fortress absolutely with Ḳaṣr ash Shama': it also shows that Miṣr or Babylon extended from Ḳaṣr ash Shama' northwards as well as west and south. In the account quoted by Maḳrīzī of the *Khiṭṭat Ahl ar Râyah* <sup>1</sup> it is probable that the houses and gardens <sup>2</sup> already existing to the north of the fortress were apportioned to the Muslims: moreover, this passage gives additional confirmation of the identity of the fortress which 'Amr besieged with Ḳaṣr ash Shama'. Ibn Duḳmâḳ <sup>3</sup> cites the same tradition from the Kitāb al Mughrib of Ibn Sa'īd, and in much the same language. So Abû Ṣâlih, in speaking of 'the city of Miṣr and outside it the city of 'Ain Shams', <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Casanova, pp. 143-4.

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> Part IV, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ed. Evetts and Butler, p. 86. I have followed the Arabic

seems to refer to them as closely adjoining, and he also implies that they were founded together. In curious correspondence with Abû Şâlih is the geographer Idrîsî, who says, 'Ancient Mişr was also called 'Ain Shams';<sup>1</sup> and again, 'The town of Mişr bears in the Greek language the name of Banbilûnah بنبلونه',<sup>2</sup> or Babylon. From these two passages taken together it is obvious that Idrîsî regarded the city of Mişr as having extended far to the north of the town as he found it c. A.D. 1150,<sup>3</sup> and that in his day the name of Babylon still survived, and was not the name of a fort or of any particular spot in Mişr, but the name of the city itself, though a name not then prevalent in use by the Arabs.

Abû Şâlih, whose date may be given roughly as A.D. 1200, confirms Idrîsî—with a strange difference—for he remarks, 'The name of Mişr in Frankish Roman (or Greek) is Babylon the Fortress',<sup>4</sup> a sen-

rather more literally than in the English translation on that page. Only one obelisk now marks the site of Heliopolis: but 'Abd al Laïf, speaking of 'Ain Shams in his day, tells of marvellous images, immense statues of hewn stone—colossi thirty cubits high, some standing on pedestals, some seated on thrones or seats of massive construction—and countless obelisks mostly overthrown and broken. He adds that one of the city gates 'remains to this day': ed. Pococke, pp. 109 seq. The passage gives an impressive idea of the size and splendour of the city which contained these monuments.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Joubert (Paris, 1836), i. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Id. ib., p. 302. The first ب is clearly a copyist's error.

<sup>3</sup> Idrîsî describes the town in his day as surrounded on all sides by gardens, plantations, sugar-canes, &c. At the time of the Arab conquest the plain north of the fortress is described by Maḳrîzî as covered with gardens and convents: but I think Idrîsî is the only writer who gives the information that the site of the Mosque of 'Amr was originally occupied by a Coptic church, which 'Amr seized and converted into a mosque (p. 303).

<sup>4</sup> p. 86.

tence which at once extends and limits the meaning quite inconsistently. But in another place Abû Şâlih shows clearly that in his opinion the name Babylon applied to the whole town at the conquest, where, speaking of 'Amr's arrival, he says, 'Al Fustât was then called Al Lûniah'.<sup>1</sup> This, as I have shown above, is merely a mutilated form of the word Babylonia, which in the Greek would be pronounced Babilunia, and which the Arabs understood as Bâb al Lûniah, or gate of Lûniah, Lûniah being the city. Abû Şâlih proceeds to speak of the Governor of Al Lûniah after the conquest demanding the poll-tax from the people—just as we find in the Aphrodito papyri that the people are ordered to deliver their tribute in money or kind at Babylon.

But this form Babylonia—which explains Idrisî's Banbilûnah and Abû Şâlih's Lûniah, and which dates (as I have shown) at least as early as the *Itinerarium Antonini*, persisted quite unaltered in Italian usage, and practically identical in European usage, far into the Middle Ages. Of this fact there is abundant evidence in the treaties and letters edited by Michele Amari<sup>2</sup> from the archives of Florence. Thus the grant of a warehouse at Babilonia is twice recorded in the treaties of A.D. 1154.<sup>3</sup> In the contemporary version of a treaty between Pisa and Egypt, Saladin is described as 'king of Babilonia';<sup>4</sup> the treaty is executed at Babilonia (Sept. 25, A.D. 1173), and witnessed by 'Marcus, Patriarch of Alexandria, of Babilonia, of Nubia, and of Saba', and the phrase

<sup>1</sup> p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *I Diplomi Arabi del R. Archivio Fiorentino*, Firenze, 1863.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 243 and 248.

<sup>4</sup> p. 257.



'Sultan of Babilonia of Egypt' or 'Sultan, lord of Babilonia' frequently occurs,<sup>1</sup> with dates ranging from A.D. 1207 to 1434. But in all these instances the Arabic text of the treaties is not given—only an Italian or Latin version: and whether the term *Babilonia* corresponds to Bâblûn or to Mişr in the Arabic cannot be absolutely determined. More probably the word was Mişr: for I do not think that a Coptic patriarch at any time would have styled himself 'patriarch of the city of Babylon' in writing his titles, whereas 'patriarch of Alexandria and of Egypt, Nubia', &c., would not have been irregular.<sup>2</sup> It might seem, therefore, that where Mişr in the sense of Egypt occurred in these treaties, the Pisan and Florentine envoys misunderstood and took it in the narrower sense of the city of Mişr, which city was familiarly known as Babylon to western peoples from the days of the crusaders.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it is beyond question that sometimes in these documents Babilonia stands, and was meant to stand, for the city and not the country: where, for example, the concession of a warehouse at Babylon is recorded, the allusion plainly is to Cairo or Old Cairo.

Beyond vague and rather baseless conjecture, there is nothing to explain how or why Babylon became almost synonymous with Egypt in western parlance. But this much at least is certain: if Babylon has not been the familiar name of a great and famous city, it

<sup>1</sup> pp. 280, 344, 357, 468. See also p. 287, and Appendix, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ancient Coptic Churches*, ii. 302.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *Devisé des chemins de Babiloine* in *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, t. 11, p. 89 (Paris, 1884), and Abû Şâlih, p. 86, n. 6.

would never have been identified with, or used as the symbol of, Egypt itself. And it must be remembered that this identification is not confined to western or foreign nations. In a well-known Coptic document of the year A.D. 1210 we find a sovereign of Egypt<sup>1</sup> described as ruler 'of Babylon of Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, &c.', which, as M. Casanova remarks, is like describing the king of Great Britain as 'king of London, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland'. But he propounds the theory that the Coptic document is a translation from an Arabic original; then for the Coptic **ⲃⲁⲃⲩⲗⲱⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲏⲏⲓ** he supposes that **ديار مصر** stood in the Arabic text, and that the Copt translator, 'ignorant les finesses de la langue Arabe, a cru que "les maisons" désignaient une ville et non une contrée', and so rendered by **ⲃⲁⲃⲩⲗⲱⲛ ⲛⲧⲉ ⲭⲏⲏⲓ** instead of **ⲭⲏⲏⲓ** alone. This is certainly ingenious, but there is one strong objection against it. Surely it is very difficult to believe that in the thirteenth century a Cairene Copt would know Coptic better than Arabic, or would so far ignore the niceties of Arabic as to misunderstand the familiar phrase **ديار مصر**. Ibn Khallikân, who was born just about the date of this document, and wrote his Biographies about A.D. 1260, numbers Coptic among the extinct written languages;<sup>2</sup> and although this assertion is exaggerated, or should at least be confined to Lower Egypt,<sup>3</sup> yet it is far more

<sup>1</sup> Casanova shows reason for regarding Saladin as the sovereign referred to. *Notes sur un texte Copte du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, par P. Casanova (Le Caire, 1901).

<sup>2</sup> In the Life of Ibn Bawwâb in vol. ii, p. 285.

<sup>3</sup> According to Abû Şâlih, at the opening of the thirteenth century, Coptic was still spoken in Upper Egypt. Thus speaking

probable that the author of the story of John of Phanidjoit's martyrdom was ignorant of the precise value of the Coptic form which he was employing, and that, as he found  $\chi\eta\eta\iota$  (in the sense of country) and  $\beta\alpha\beta\tau\lambda\omega\eta\iota$   $\pi\tau\epsilon$   $\chi\eta\eta\iota$  (in the sense of city) both rendered by Miṣr in Arabic, he confused the two or thought them equivalent. Of course it may be held that the Copts by this time had extended the meaning of Babylon from city to country, like the westerns, in forgetfulness of the original limitation of the term. But M. Amélineau shows<sup>1</sup> that in this very document the word  $\chi\eta\eta\iota$  is used both for Cairo and for Egypt without  $\beta\alpha\beta\tau\lambda\omega\eta\iota$ .<sup>2</sup> Clearly the elements of confusion existed: and it was this confusion which made Babylon a synonym for Egypt.

Nor is the definite recognition of this synonym wanting in Arabic writers. Thus Maḳrīzī<sup>3</sup> quotes 'Abd al Malik Ibn Hishām as saying: 'Bāblūtūn is a name denoting Egypt', and Al Ḳudā'i (ob. A. D. 1062) as saying: 'Outside Fuṣṭāṭ is the Ḳaṣr known as

of Udrunkah, he says: 'The Christians living there are learned in their religion and in expounding the Coptic language' (p. 315); and again, of the same place: 'The inhabitants . . . understand the Coptic language, which is the means of communication there both for children and adults, and they are able to explain it in Arabic' (p. 343). More curious is another remark: 'The Christian women of Upper Egypt and their children can hardly speak anything but the Sahidic dialect of Coptic; they have, however, also a perfect knowledge of the Greek language' (p. 317). Unless *Greek* here is an error for *Arabic*, the last statement is almost incredible: the idea of Coptic women in Upper Egypt possessing a perfect knowledge of Greek is absurd.

<sup>1</sup> *Géog. copte*, p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> See also Casanova, *Noms Coptes*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>3</sup> *Khifāt*, i. 287.

Bâb Liûn (Babylon) on the hill. Liûn is the name of the country of Egypt in the language of the negroes and of the Greeks'. Again, in the compendium of Yaḳûṭ called *Marâṣid al Iṭṭilâ'*<sup>1</sup> we find it stated that 'Babylon is a general name for Egypt in the language of the ancients and a special name for Fustât'—very remarkable testimony.

I have now endeavoured to trace the history and meaning of the term Babylon of Egypt from pre-Christian times down to the fifteenth century of our era, and have shown that while originally it denoted a settlement of no great size, the town advanced to become the second metropolis of Egypt, outlasting the more ancient cities of Heliopolis and Memphis: that for centuries before and for a long time after the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs, Babylon was the name of a great city: and that when the Arab designation Fustât so far prevailed that the term Babylon passed out of vogue in the popular language, such nevertheless was the renown of Babylon that the name was used as a symbol and synonym for Egypt itself throughout Europe.

The evidence is strong and continuous, and the conclusion it carries seems to me irresistible. It is this: that when Arab historians, of whom the earliest wrote some centuries after the conquest, speak of Babylon as if it were this or that particular fort or building or locality in Ancient Miṣr, they speak erroneously.

That they do so speak, however, is undeniable: and this fact has yet to be considered. Two things

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Juynboll, i. 113.

are certain : first that the Arab settlement called Fustât gradually spread all over the site of Babylon or Mişr, so as to encompass Kaşr ash Shama' on every side ; and next that all the Roman and other ancient remains of Babylon disappeared under this process with the single exception of that great fortress. It is clear, too, that the conquerors tended more and more to apply the name Fustât, which reminded them of their first encampment in Egypt, to the spreading Arab town ; and that of the two coexisting ancient names for the locality they preferred Mişr<sup>1</sup> with its simply Arabicized form to the puzzling Babylon or Babylonia, with its misleading suggestions Gate of Yûn or Ôn, Gate of Liûn, and Gate of Lûniâh. But it is perfectly natural that as the Roman remains vanished, so the Roman name Babylon became more and more divorced from the Arab town and more and more strictly confined and limited to the fortress of Kaşr ash Shama', which challenged time and change, and stood as the one enduring monument of the Roman dominion.

That this explanation fits the facts better than any other, I have no doubt : nor do I doubt that where an Arab writer speaks of Babylon in connexion with the conquest, he means either the city of Babylon or else Kaşr ash Shama' : but in most cases the consciousness that Babylon was a great city at the conquest had been lost when the chronicles were written. I hold, therefore, that the expression Fortress of Babylon, which I have applied to Kaşr ash Shama', is correct in both senses, i.e. whether

<sup>1</sup> Idrîsî uses the terms Mişr and Fustât indifferently with a slight preference for Mişr.

used—analogously to Tower of London—to denote the ancient fortress of the city, or used in the sense of Babylon the Fortress.

But it will be said that Arab writers sometimes localize the name Babylon to a point which is outside the fortress and which therefore must be distinguished from the fortress. This is apparently true: and it must be granted that more than one such point is mentioned. For instance, Ibn Duqmâk has the following passage:<sup>1</sup> '*Kanîsat as S'âdah*. This church is on the skirt of Kôm ibn Ghurâb among the potteries near Bâb al Yûn (Babylon). *Kanîsat Abû Kîr*. This church adjoins the last near Bâb al Yûn. *Kanîsah known as Santâdur (Tâdrus)*. This church, too, adjoins the two preceding near Bâb al Yûn. All three are in one place.'

There can be no doubt that the writer here refers to the three still existing churches which I have elsewhere described.<sup>2</sup> The first is now called the 'Church of Al 'Aḍra by Babylon of the Steps', and the others Abû Kîr wa Yuḥannâ and Tâdrus; so that the names subsist unchanged to this day.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> iv. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient Coptic Churches*, i. 250 seq.

<sup>3</sup> Casanova in *Noms Coptes* (p. 30) cites this passage and also a corresponding passage from Maḥrîzî, which gives, however, a church of Abû Mînâ instead of Abû Kîr. Either Maḥrîzî is mistaken and is thinking of the Abû Mînâ (or Mârî Mînâ) which lies north of Ḳaṣr ash Shama': or if this other church of St. Menas existed when he wrote, it has completely disappeared. Probably there is a textual error as Casanova supposes. But on the same page Casanova quotes from Amélineau a passage in the Synaxarium which alleges that the bodies of SS. Barbara and Juliana were laid in a church of Abû Kîr. Now I find that the text of the Synaxarium as given by Basset does not agree with this: it says that 'The bodies of the two saints were laid in a church outside the city of Ghalâliyâ, and the body of St. Barbara is to-day in the

But the question is what does Ibn Duḡmâḡ mean when he speaks of these churches as *near Babylon*? Can it possibly imply that the name Babylon was then specialized to denote a place identical with the locality in which the name Bâblûn is still preserved? I think not. These churches are not said to be *in* Babylon, but *near* Babylon: consequently the place at which they stood and still stand was *not* Babylon. If it is argued that the name must have belonged to the spot, because it is there still, I answer that the title of the church to-day is not 'Church of Babylon' but '*Church of the Virgin by Bâblûn of the Steps*'. That is the official title, and Dair Bâblûn is a mere popular abbreviation of the name of the convent: which is still, therefore, properly described

city of Miṣr in the church of Abû Ḳîr' (*Patr. Or.*, t. III, fasc. iii, 2, p. 404). Casanova rightly observes that this church has nothing to do with Abû Ḳîr on the north coast (as Amélineau supposes), but must be either the church in Dair Tâdrus or else a church in Ḳaṣr ash Shama': and he cites Eutychius in favour of the latter locality. I have already shown (*Ancient Coptic Churches*, i. 249) that there is no evidence for such a church in Ḳaṣr ash Shama' to corroborate Eutychius. But if it were true, it is certain that this church was destroyed: and I think it far more probable that a new church dedicated to St. Barbara was erected, with or without her relics, than that the existing church of St. Barbara was originally called Abû Ḳîr and has changed its dedication, as Casanova supposes. But it is not even certain that Eutychius meant to say that the church was *inside* the Ḳaṣr: his language might be interpreted merely to be a loose description of the existing Abû Ḳîr as by the entrance of the Ḳaṣr. For Ibn Duḡmâḡ (ii. 26) speaks of the gate which is on the eastern side of the fortress, and was called the Iron Gate, as the gate by which the whole of Ḳaṣr ar Rûm is entered, Ḳaṣr ar Rûm being of course another name for Ḳaṣr ash Shama'. This gate, therefore, was specially recognized as the entrance of the Roman fortress: it is the one still remaining, and Dair Bâblûn is very near it.

not as Babylon or in Babylon, but near Babylon. Babylon is a name belonging not to the site but to the vicinity: and the actual proximity of this group of churches to *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* fully explains all that needs explanation in the title.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly neither Ibn Duḳmâḳ nor the modern name of the place can be held to prove any such use of the term Babylon as would necessarily distinguish it from *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*.

But the passage from *Al Ḳudâ'i* cited by Maḳ-rîzî, which describes the *Ḳaṣr* called Babylon as outside *Fuṣṭât* and on a hill, would seem to imply that a Fortress of Babylon existed in the eleventh century which was not *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, but was on a hill: and that consequently an ancient building still remained upon the height, which is taken to be *Ar Raṣad*. Indeed, *Al Ḳudâ'i* goes on to say, 'A little of it remains built in stone at the extremity of the

<sup>1</sup> The term 'of the Steps' remains puzzling. It might perhaps refer to the steps which have been brought to light by the south gate of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*—the nearest point of the fortress. But it may be possible to get a little closer to the true explanation. It is pointed out by Guest and Richmond in *J. R. A. S.*, 1903 (p. 804), that 'there seems to have been a gate in the town wall of *Miṣr* which was called Gate of *Bâblûn*', and reference is made to *Khîḏât*, ii. 517, l. 12. The position of this wall or section of the wall was, according to the writers, south of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, and it ran east and west near *Dair Tâdrus* and *Dair Bâblûn*. The tradition that this wall was part of the ancient circuit wall of Babylon city may well have lingered on, so that the gate in it became known as the Gate of Babylon, just as the fortress within was called Fortress of Babylon. And assuming that the line of the wall is correctly indicated, the wall must have risen near the two convents; and there may well have been steps inside leading up to the gate. This is merely conjectural: but it seems that, in explaining the origin of the name *Bâblûn* in *Dair Bâblûn*, one may trace it to a point even nearer than the fortress.



mount (*jabal*), and at the present day there is a mosque on it'.

Maḳrīzī comments upon this as follows: 'This is obviously an express assertion that Ḳaṣr Bâb al Yûn is not the same as Ḳaṣr ash Shama': for Ḳaṣr ash Shama' is in the interior of Fustât, and this Ḳaṣr Bâb al Yûn, according to Al Ḳudâ'i, is on the hill known as Ash Sharaf, and Ash Sharaf is outside Fustât. But it is contrary to what Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam says in his Futûh Miṣr'.

Maḳrīzī therefore refutes Al Ḳudâ'i upon the evidence of Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam, and believes that Babylon and Ḳaṣr ash Shama' are identical.

Moreover, Maḳrīzī is fully aware that the Babylon of Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam and the Ḳaṣr ash Shama' of Al Ḳudâ'i were one and the same. For he puts side by side the description of the fortress as it is given by each of the two writers: (i) Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam says: 'The Persians had begun the building of the fortress called Babylon, that is the fortress which is now in Fustât: but when the armies of Persia were defeated and driven out of Syria by the Romans, the latter finished the building of the stronghold, and reoccupied it. Egypt then remained under Roman rule until God conquered it for the Muslims'.<sup>1</sup> The corresponding passage of Al

<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt whatever that this refers to Ḳaṣr ash Shama'. Professor C. C. Torrey, of Yale, who is editing the unpublished MS. of Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam, has been kind enough to give me the benefit of his complete knowledge of the text, and he writes as follows:—'This statement of Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam agrees with what he says everywhere else. According to his account in the Futûh Miṣr, the ultimate stronghold of the Greeks, the "fortress" where the decisive battle was fought was باب اليون . . . Babylon is the

Ḳudâ'i occurs in that writer's description of Ḳaṣr ash Shama', and is as follows:—(ii) 'It is said that the Persians when they overcame the Romans and ruled Syria as their masters, and also got possession of Egypt, began the building of this fortress and constructed a fire-temple in it. It was not completed, however, by their hands: but when they were conquered by the Romans, the latter finished the building and fortified it. They then remained in it till the time of the [Muslim] conquest.' It is clear, therefore, that what Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam calls Babylon, Al Ḳudâ'i calls Ḳaṣr ash Shama', and that Al Ḳudâ'i in putting the fortress called Babylon in quite another place is in glaring contradiction with Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam.

On the other hand it is fair to remember that Ibn Duḡmâḡ seems to confirm Al Ḳudâ'i when he remarks<sup>1</sup> that Al Ḥâkim built the mosque of Ar Raṣad on the *sharaf* near the remains of the fortress on the river bank, connected with the island by a pontoon bridge, over which the Muḡauḡis made his escape, emerging from the castle by the southern gate. In the passage in which Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam first mentions the fortress in his account of the conquest, it might seem that he makes a distinction between a more comprehensive fortification (اللمن) and a smaller citadel (القصر)... But the fact is... that Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam here uses the term *اللمن* loosely, referring to the whole settlement at this strategic point. In the sequel, in speaking of the actual siege, he uses the terms *اللمن* and *القصر* interchangeably without any distinction whatever.' My thanks are also due to Professor Torrey for some of the information which I have embodied in the text above.

<sup>1</sup> Part IV, 58. Ibn Khallikân also, in his *Life of Al Ḥâkim* (ed. de Slane, iii. 457), records the completion of a mosque on Ar Raṣad called *Jâmi' al Filah*, which was begun by Al Afdal in A.D. 1104. Guest refers to Maḡrîzî's *Khîṭât*, ii. 451. (*J. R. A. S.*, January, 1907, p. 72.)

Ḳaṣr known as Babylon—in the year A.D. 1012. But I think the significance of this passage is merely that the *sharaf* was near the remains of Ḳaṣr ash Shama', and that such destruction of the circuit wall to the north of the fortress as had then taken place justified Ibn Duḡmâḵ in speaking of its 'remains'. Yet Maḳrîzî<sup>1</sup> himself elsewhere identifies the hill of Babylon with one near Zain al 'Âbidîn—perhaps that on which the citadel of Cairo now stands—proof that he is rather at sea in the matter, and can place the hill north as readily as south of Ḳaṣr ash Shama'; indeed, in yet another passage<sup>2</sup> he puts Babylon again to the north, but near Maḳs. His evidence, therefore, is too contradictory to support any very definite conclusion. But it may even be that Al Ḳudâ'î also, in placing Babylon outside Fustât and in speaking of some remains in the *jabal* together with a mosque, is not thinking of Ar Raṣad at all, but of Al Muḳaṭṭam, as the site of the ancient Babylon.

<sup>1</sup> *Khîṭât*, i. 298. See Casanova's edition, p. 148, and his note. He inclines to think that Maḳrîzî's text here must be corrupt.

<sup>2</sup> Id., ii. 452. See Guest and Richmond's Article on Miṣr in *J. R. A. S.*, 1903, p. 807.

## CHAPTER V

APART from these confused statements, there seems to be no evidence for the existence of any ancient remains upon Ar Raşad, nor of the name Babylon as a particular name attaching to that elevation. Upon one of the citations from Ibn 'Abd al Ĥakam made by Maḳrızî, M. Casanova in his edition of the latter writer <sup>1</sup> propounds a theory that Ḳaşr ash Shama' and Babylon were distinct, and that there were two separate sieges—one of Ḳaşr ash Shama' and one of Babylon. But the very text which he quotes contains the refutation of this theory: because, while Ibn 'Abd al Ĥakam is describing the siege of a fortress which he expressly calls Babylon, he makes the Muḳauḳis quit the fortress by its south gate and cross to the island of Rauḍah.<sup>2</sup> The south gate of Ḳaşr ash Shama' is the one remaining to-day, and the quay is still there at which boats were moored, as the story requires, for crossing to the island, which lay opposite the fortress: and these details, which are so exactly conformable with the topography and the structure of Ḳaşr ash Shama', are totally at variance with any theory which places Babylon upon an elevated rock

<sup>1</sup> p. 120, n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Casanova admits that the arsenal proves the island to be Rauḍah: *id.*, p. 121, note 1. The arsenal of Rauḍah is frequently mentioned in Arab history.

like Ar Raṣād. I have dealt with this question elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> and must refer to the argument there.

But there are one or two other pieces of evidence which may be added. That Maḳrīzī himself regards the fort (*ḥiṣn*) which 'Amr besieged as Ḳaṣr ash Shama' is clear from the words in his chapter called 'The site of Al Fuṣṭāṭ before Islam'. They are to the effect that the *only building* there was 'a fortress called to-day Ḳaṣr ash Shama' and Al Mu'allakah', a fortress which then looked on to the Nile, though he adds that convents and churches were scattered all over the plain around.<sup>2</sup> Nothing could be less ambiguous.

And that this fortress was the only fortress apart from 'Umm Dûnain mentioned, or correctly mentioned, in Arab histories of the conquest, can be proved by other evidence. I have already dealt above with John of Nikiou's distinction between the capture of the city of Miṣr and the capture of the citadel of Babylon, and have shown that the distinction as regards the names is accidental, and the names might be reversed. John might just as well have said the city of Babylon and the citadel of Miṣr. But there is, so far as I am aware, no trace in Arab writers of any consciousness that there was any struggle around Ar Raṣād, still less that at the conquest a fortress there existed which could be called the citadel. For consider: if M. Casanova's theory were true—if the fortress of Babylon really were placed on Ar Raṣād—then we should have this strange result, that there stood upon that height a building so vast and so

<sup>1</sup> *The Treaty of Miṣr in Tabari*, pp. 19 seq. (Oxford, 1913.)

<sup>2</sup> Ed. Casanova, pp. 104-5.

strong that *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* with all its huge walls and towers—its powerful and impregnable defences, as John of Nikiou calls them—was comparatively easy of capture, indeed fell almost without a blow, while a siege of seven months was necessary to reduce the stronghold on *Ar Raṣad*. For if Babylon were on *Ar Raṣad*, that story would be required, and that alone could be founded on John of Nikiou's narrative.

But that story is obviously unhistorical. Archaeology, too, is against it. For Trajan's fortress withstood the shocks of time in the main unbroken for more than thirteen centuries,<sup>1</sup> while no one has ever been able to point out any authentic ancient remains whatever upon *Ar Raṣad*. There is, however, one piece of evidence which might be cited against this statement, and which must be examined.

In *Cairo Fifty Years Ago*<sup>2</sup> the common misunderstandings about Babylon are exemplified, e.g. 'The Egyptian Babylon was situated on a rocky hill called in Arabic *ash Sharaf*': *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* 'was on the north-west of Babylon', while the other fortress 'was upon the hill, and this being *within* the town was particularly called by the Arabs "the Fortress or Palace of Babylon" (*Ḳaṣr Bâbelyûn*), though it is clear that *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* was the chief fortress or defence of Babylon'. But the writer, Lane, goes on to say that the building now used as

<sup>1</sup> See my plan in *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 240. This plan has been reproduced by Caetani in his *Annali dell' Islam*, vol. iv, p. 272, who also gives some photographs on pp. 184 and 256.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. S. Lane-Poole, 1896, p. 146. I have reason to think that Dr. Lane-Poole would no longer agree with the opinions here quoted.

a powder magazine upon the hill was named Iṣṭabl Anṭâr, and that 'this was probably what the Arabs called "Ḳaṣr Bâbelyûn".' No proof at all is given to support this opinion, and there is nothing at present to show that the 'massive walls' of this magazine on Ar Raṣad are not of Arab construction. The nature of the building unfortunately debarred me, as it has debarred others, from examining it and studying its construction: and it may be that some traces of Roman or even earlier architecture may be discovered there whenever a proper survey is permitted and carried out. But against this possibility must be weighed the evidence of Pococke, who wrote a hundred years before Lane, and who carefully studied the remains on the spot. He gives a sketch of what he calls 'Jebel Jehusi, the Old Babylon',<sup>1</sup> i.e. Ar Raṣad, a sketch which conveys a fair idea of Strabo's rocky ridge; but all he shows upon the eastern end of the hill, where the powder magazine now stands, is a small round building like a low tower. There is nothing whatever corresponding to the large rectangular building with which the traveller is familiar: and though it is possible that this building lay outside Pococke's field of view, the inference rather is that the building was not standing there at the time of Pococke's visit c. A.D. 1740. Indeed, the silence of Pococke confirms this inference from the picture. He believes that the hill is the site of the ancient Babylonian settlement—indeed, that the city of Babylon centred about the hill; and he proceeds to say:

<sup>1</sup> *Description of the East*, vol. i, p. 25, pl. viii. See also the photographs in *Annali dell' Islam*, vol. iv, facing p. 168.

‘On the top of the hill is the uninhabited convent of St. Michael, to which a priest goes every Sunday to officiate. The town of Babylon, probably in time, extended down to the plain’ [from the hill]: ‘for to the north of that part of the hill which sets out toward the river’ (i.e. the rocky ridge) ‘are remains of a very extensive building, which I conjecture might be a sort of castrum for the Roman legion which was at Babylon. It is called *Ḳaṣr Kieman*, &c.’ Now of this *Ḳaṣr Kieman*<sup>1</sup> Pococke gives a plan absolutely and incontrovertibly identifying it with *Ḳaṣr ash Shama*’; indeed, in a note he remarks, ‘I found some called this place *Casrke-shemeh*.’ Pococke, therefore, knows of no fortress of Babylon upon the hill. He mentions and sketches Strabo’s rocky ridge or *Ar Raṣad*: he mentions, sketches, and plans out *Ḳaṣr ash Shama*’; but he is totally silent as regards the existence of any building upon *Ar Raṣad* except an abandoned or nearly abandoned Coptic convent. But if the ancient remains which Lane imagined he saw in 1840 were really ancient, and if they represented the Babylonian fortress of antiquity, they must have been in better preservation and more conspicuous a hundred years earlier at the time of Pococke’s visit, and Pococke could never have passed them over in

<sup>1</sup> The name is probably a corruption of the Coptic *ⲡⲧⲉ ⲭⲏⲙⲓ*. In my *Ancient Coptic Churches*, i. 176, I have perhaps done some injustice to Pococke’s plan of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama*’. It is true that he did not measure the angles &c. of the circuit wall, and so produces a neat parallelogram instead of a very irregular figure: but the second pair of round towers which he indicates may have existed, and the general extent of the remains which he saw may be given with rough accuracy.



total silence. Lane's evidence upon the subject must therefore be regarded as mistaken.

Moreover, it is no exaggeration to say that the Arab historians, with the slight exceptions given above, are hardly conscious that there can be any question of a difference between the site of the ancient Persian fortress and the site of the Roman fortress of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*. To them the site of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* is also the site of the Babylonian fortress.

I have admitted and do not doubt that the original Persian fortress was actually built upon *Ar Raṣad*. But the Arab writers so persistently identify the site of the original fortress with *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* that they are proved not to have suspected any difference between the sites: and this again proves that no ancient fortress can have existed upon *Ar Raṣad* in Arab times. When Trajan built *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, in lieu of the Persian stronghold upon *Ar Raṣad*, for the Roman legion quartered at Babylon, the Persian fortress was either dismantled or perished subsequently by natural decay; and the period of more than 500 years which elapsed between the construction of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* and the invasion of the Arabs fully suffices to account for the total disappearance of the Persian fort. Vague traditions of its former existence survived in Babylon, and some echo of these traditions was caught by the Arabs: but their writers were driven irresistibly to identify the vanished castle of the Persians with the still standing castle of the Romans, that castle which 'Amr had conquered with so much difficulty.

Some further proofs of this may be given.

I have already dwelt upon John of Nikiou's evidence showing that this early Coptic historian definitely calls *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* by the name *Babylon*, and definitely assigns its origin to *Nebuchadnezzar* and its reconstruction to *Trajan*; whence one must argue that, if the Persian fort on *Ar Raṣad* had been in existence when John wrote in the seventh century, it would have been quite impossible for him to allege that it was the same fort which *Trajan* rebuilt. The Arab writers may have got their information from John's history: but if so, they see no reason for doubting his account of the matter. Thus *Maḳrīzī*<sup>1</sup> repeats the same story. *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, he says, was founded after the devastation of Egypt by *Nebuchadnezzar*, though other opinions are held as to the date of its construction and the name of the founder. He goes on to say that it (the Persian fort) lay in ruins for 500 years, and hardly a vestige of it remained: until the Romans, having conquered Egypt from the Greeks, sent *Arjalīs* (? *Archelaus*), who rebuilt the fortress upon the old foundations, which he discovered.<sup>2</sup> According to *Ibn Sa'id* it was *Kasharjūsh*, the Persian, who built *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*: others say *Artaxerxes*, or a king of Egypt named *Ḳastū*, who built a temple of fire on the bank of the Nile. I will not repeat *Ibn 'Abd al Ḥakam*'s evidence. *Al Ḳudā'i* in his chapter 'on the Fortress of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*' gives much the same story, but adds that the temple of fire is the building still called in his day the 'Dome of Smoke': and this account

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Casanova, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> This is quoted from *Al Waḳidī*: see Hamaker's edition, Notes, pp. 90 seq. *Arjalīs* might be *Trajan*'s engineer or general.

seems to stand in opposition to Al ẖudá's other account cited above, which places Babylon on the *sharaf* or cliff.<sup>1</sup>

So, again, the Marāṣid al Iṭṭilā'<sup>2</sup> alleges that ẖaṣr ash Shama' was a castle, on the site of Fustāṭ in Egypt, built by the Persians and completed by the Romans. Severus<sup>3</sup> knows nothing of a fort on Ar Raṣad. His words are: 'Then the Arabs crossed the hills (the desert) until they arrived at a fortress built of stone situated between Upper and Lower Egypt and called Babylon. And here they pitched their tents, that they might prepare to fight a battle with the Romans. Then the Arabs called that place, namely the fortress, Bāblūn al Fustāṭ (perhaps Bāblūn of Al Fustāṭ), and that is its name to this day'. The fact that the camp was pitched before the fortress proves that it was ẖaṣr ash Shama', and that fortress Severus says was called Babylon at the time he wrote. And Mas'ūdī, speaking with apparent reason,<sup>4</sup> carries the name ẖaṣr ash Shama' back to the date of the conquest, when he says that Al

<sup>1</sup> See Casanova's *Maḡrīzī*, pp. 107-9. The article in the *J. R. A. S.*, for 1903, says (p. 807) that 'Maḡrīzī, despite the conflicting statements of his predecessors, realized that the ancient Babylonian fortress was not the same as ẖaṣr ash Shama', but it is evident that he had not identified its remains': and the writers go on to explain Maḡrīzī's own inconsistencies. But their words which I have given appear to assume that remains of the Babylonian fortress existed in Maḡrīzī's time, and this assumption does not seem well warranted.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 221.

<sup>3</sup> Brit. Mus. MS. Or. 26100, p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> I have elsewhere expressed the opinion that the name ẖaṣr ash Shama' probably arose from the Coptic ϣαϣρⲁⲥⲱⲙⲁⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ. See Abū Ṣāliḥ, p. 72, n. 4. I may add that it is sometimes called (e.g. by Ibn Duḡmāḳ) ẖaṣr ar Rūm, and that this name seems rightly held by Casanova to lie underneath the Coptic ϣαϣρⲁⲥⲱⲙⲁⲓⲛⲓⲛⲓ.

Muḳauḳis spent part of the year in Ḳaṣr ash Shama', which to-day is known under the same name in the middle of Fustât:<sup>1</sup> and his whole account proves incontestably that this fortress of Al Yûnah (or Lûnah as he elsewhere calls it), by which he means Babylon, must be identified with Ḳaṣr ash Shama'. Abû Şâliḥ<sup>2</sup> says that the people of Fustât dug a moat against the Arabs; that Fustât then was called Al Lûnah (or Babylon); and that 'Amr, when he had received reinforcements, took the fortress: moreover, he speaks of 'the governor of Al Lûnah or Fustât' after the conquest. It would clearly be impossible to speak of the *governor of Babylon* as governor of the conquered city, if Babylon were a mere fort on Ar Raṣad. On the other hand, Abû Şâliḥ does mention two forts built by Khûsh (or Artaxerxes Ochus), king of the Persians, viz. Ḳaṣr ash Shama' and another on the other side of the Nile.<sup>3</sup> But inasmuch as he alleges that the king (Ochus) 'used to alight at both forts from his boat', Abû Şâliḥ obviously has no idea of any fort upon a considerable elevation like Ar Raṣad. Indeed, the context leaves no shadow of doubt that this second Persian fort was at Jîzah, on the western bank of the river. The notice is interesting, because it proves that the Persians saw the military necessity

<sup>1</sup> Ed. de Goeje, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> p. 177: 'There is a church of Mark the Evangelist and Apostle in the fort built by Khûsh, king of the Persians, at the same time as Ḳaṣr ash Shama'.' This church of St. Mark was at Jîzah. But from Ibn Duḳmâḳ (iv. 126) one is driven to conclude that the fort at Jîzah also had disappeared, because, in A.D. 642, a fort was seen to be necessary, and the Arabs at first refused to build one as ordered by Omar.

of fortifying both banks of the Nile at the apex of the Delta, just as subsequently the Romans stationed one legion at Memphis and one at Babylon, and the Arabs in turn placed a strong garrison at Jîzah after the conquest as well as at Babylon.<sup>1</sup> But the very fact that Abû Şâlih, while he mentions two fortresses founded by the Persians, does not mention or betray any knowledge of a Persian fortress upon Ar Raşad, must be taken as one more proof that no ancient remains existed there in Abû Şâlih's time, and that the very tradition of Strabo's fortress was unknown to him.

Finally, Eutychius,<sup>2</sup> who has a similar tradition of Artaxerxes Ochus, mentions only one fortress as built by him, and that fortress he expressly identifies with Kaşr ash Shama'.

It would be easy to produce other passages from Arab annals and to show that where the name Babylon is applied to a fortress, it is of Kaşr ash Shama' that the writer is thinking in every case, and that there is no testimony whatever for the existence of any fortress upon Ar Raşad in Arab times. In all these Arab authors, wherever the Persian tradition is given, it is associated with Kaşr ash Shama' and not with Ar Raşad.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, so strong and so one-sided is the evidence of this association, that I should be inclined to question Strabo's story

<sup>1</sup> See *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, p. 431.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Patr. Gr.*, cxi, p. 967.

<sup>3</sup> It may be mentioned that Suyûtî speaks of a Kaşr Fâris, or Persian Fort, outside the walls of Alexandria (Ḥusn al Muḥâḍarah, pt. I, p. 65, Cairo ed.): but there is nothing to show whether this fort was older than the time of Chosroes.

of the 'rocky ridge reaching down to the Nile', were it not that such a ridge exists to-day, and after a careful survey on the spot I am bound to admit that the description of Strabo must have been absolutely accurate, and that the Persian fortress existed there at the time of Strabo's visit to Egypt.

But this admission in no way weakens the evidence upon which I found the conclusion that at the time of the Arab conquest the Persian fortress recorded by Strabo had either vanished altogether or lay in ruins. Any remains which then existed were too insignificant either to bear part in the Roman defences of Babylon or to impress the imagination of Coptic or Arab historians.

To sum up. It seems established

(1) that on the site of Ancient Miṣr or Old Cairo there originally existed in Pharaonic times a city of some importance, marked by Egyptian monuments, (such as the Suriyat abī al Ḥōl or Doxy of the Sphinx,) some of which survived to the days of Al Ḥākīm :

(2) that in the sixth century before our era there was a Babylonian military settlement made and a fortress erected upon the rocky height which the Arabs later called Ar Raṣad :

(3) that from this settlement the name Babylon spread over the adjacent region, and became the normal designation of a great town extending far enough northward of Ar Raṣad to touch with its outlying suburbs the southern environs of the mighty but decaying city of Heliopolis :

(4) that when Trajan, wishing to strengthen his hold upon the apex of the Delta, resolved to build a

powerful fortress as the citadel of Babylon, he abandoned the site of the Persian fort upon Ar Raṣād and planted his citadel upon the bank of the Nile, so as to secure an unfailing water supply for the garrison and free communication by river between the garrison and the rest of Egypt : and this fortress was called the Castle of Babylon, or the Castle of Khêmi, and that the Arabic form of the name was *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'* :

(5) that the Persian fort on Ar Raṣād thenceforward fell into decay and oblivion, so that at the Arab conquest, five and a half centuries later, only vague traditions of its existence survived :

(6) that the name of Babylon, which the Arabs found applied to the city otherwise called *Miṣr* was gradually displaced by the new name *Fuṣṭât* of Arab origin ; and as the name *Fuṣṭât* grew and prevailed to designate the city, so the name Babylon fell into disfavour and disuse, until at the time when the Arab chronicles began to be written it had become practically restricted to the fortress of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, yet curiously prevailed in Europe to denote the whole country of Egypt :

(7) and that, finally, even the limited use of the name tended to disappear in Egypt in more modern times, as the association of the term Babylon with the fortress was weakened or severed ; so that to-day it is not among the ruins of *Ḳaṣr ash Shama'*, but in the little Coptic convent called *Dair Bâblûn* near the southern gate of the fortress, that there lingers the name of the great city which succeeded Memphis as the capital of Middle Egypt.

# INDEX

- 'Abd al 'Azîz, 28.  
'Ain Shams = Heliopolis, 11, 38, 39, &c.  
Alexandria, 28.  
Amari's Treaties, 40.  
Antony, Mount of St., 14.  
Apa Tîl, 12.  
Apollinaris, patriarch, 14 and *n.* 3; 18 *n.*  
Arianus, 12.  
Arjalîs, 58.  
Artaxerxes, 58; *v.* also Ochus.  
  
Bâblûn, 43.  
Babylonia, 12, 13, 17 *n.* 2, 40, 41, 45.  
Baladhurî, 35.  
Banbilûnah, 39.  
  
Cambyses, 8, 9.  
Canal of Trajan, 9, 10, 26-34, 35, 36.  
Church of Abû Kîr, 46 and *n.* 3.  
— — Al 'Adra, 46.  
— — St. Michael, 56.  
— — St. Mînâ, 10.  
— — St. Tâdrus, 46.  
Clysma or Clysmon, 12, 24.  
Coptic language, 42, 43.  
Cyrus, bishop of Babylon, 14.  
— patriarch of Alexandria, 26, 27.  
  
Diodorus, 5, 6.  
Dockyards at Babylon, 30.  
Dome of Smoke, 58.  
  
Eilêou, 17 and *n.* 1.  
Eutychius, 22, 61.  
  
Fustât, 29-34 and *passim*.  
— origin of name, 31.  
  
Granaries at Babylon, 29.  
Greek language, 42 *n.* 3.  
  
Hamrâ, 10.  
— al Kuşwâ, 36.  
— origin of name, 37.  
Heliopolis (*v.* 'Ain Shams), 33, 36, 62.  
— bishopric of, 17 and *n.* 1.  
Heliu, 12.  
Heroon Polis, 9, 10.  
  
Ibn 'Abd al Hakam, 49 seq., 52 seq.  
— Khallikân, 37 *n.*, 42.  
Idrîsî, 9, 39.  
Iliou, 27.  
Isaac, patriarch of Alexandria, 28.  
Iştâbl Anâr, 55.  
  
Jabal Jehusi, 55.  
— Jûyûshî, 23.  
— Yashkur, 36.  
Jâmi' al Filah, 50 *n.*  
John of Nikiou, 10, 24 seq., 54, 58.  
Josephus, 8.  
  
Kasharjûsh, 58.  
Kaşr Fâris, 61 *n.* 3.  
— Kieman, 56.  
— ash Shama', *passim*.  
Kaştû, 58.  
Kôm al Ahmar, 36.  
Al Kudâ'î, 12, 43, 48 seq., 58.  
Kurrah, 28.  
  
Leontopolis, 18 *n.*  
Letopolis, 6, 8.  
Liouî, 17 *n.* 1.  
Lîûn, 44, 45.  
Lûnîab, 12, 17 *n.* 2, 40, 45, 60.  
  
Macedonia (name applied to Mişr), 13 *n.* 1.  
Maş, 10.  
Marâşid al Ittîlâ', 44, 59.  
  
Marcus, patriarch of Alexandria, 40.  
Memphis, 6, 15 seq., &c.  
Mişr al Qadîmab, 15, 18 seq., 30, &c.  
Mosque of 'Amr, 9, 39 *n.* 3.  
Muḥâjirûn, 29, 32.  
  
Nâsir-i-Khusrau, 9, 32.  
Nebuchadnezzar, 9, 24, 25, 58.  
  
Ochus, Artaxerxes, 60.  
Ôn, 16, 17, and *n.* 2.  
  
Pauly, 8, 9.  
Pelusium, 13.  
Plans referred to, 34 *n.*  
Pococke, 55-56.  
Ptolemy, 9 seq., 36.  
  
Ar Raşad, 7, 23, 34, 52, 53 seq., &c.  
Raḍah, 9, 29.  
  
Saladin, 40.  
Scalae, 16.  
Scenas Veteranorum, 12.  
Semiramis, 7.  
Serapiu, 12.  
Sesostris, 6, 7.  
Severus, 56.  
  
Tammôou, 21 *n.* 1.  
Tampeti, 13.  
Theodoric, 14.  
Thou, 12.  
  
Vicum Judaeorum, 12.  
  
Al Yûn, 46-49.  
Yûnah, 60.  
  
Zain al 'Âbidû, 51.  
Zenobia, 23.  
Zosimus, bishop of Babylon, 13.  
— historian, 23.













